

The City of Edinburgh Council

Specialist Provision Profiles & Capacity

Position Paper – November 2025

Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council believes that inclusion is the cornerstone for schools to achieve equity and excellence in education for all our children and young people. An inclusive approach with an appreciation of diversity, and an ambition for all to achieve their full potential, is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all.

The City of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Learn's Inclusion policy details the actions required by all learning establishments and aspires to ensure the ongoing development of inclusive practices within The City of Edinburgh Council. It complements and is integrated within a suite of policies and guidance which align with the local authority's vision for all children and young people – Edinburgh Learns for Life. These policies provide a framework for the Stakeholders to address the additional support and wellbeing needs of children and young people in partnership with other agencies and the wider community. They are more than a statement of good intentions; guidance must be acted upon, embedded in practice, and regularly monitored to ensure that barriers to learning are reduced. We want and expect the best for, and from, our children and young people.

The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to, and responsible for, responding to the evolving requirements of children and young people with additional support needs. Additional support needs are defined within the Education (Additional Support Needs) (S) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) as “where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person.”

The Education Scotland Act (1980) places a statutory duty on authorities to make adequate and efficient provision of school education for their area. The authority is also responsible for taking into account the needs of the whole area and the likely pattern of need in the future, beyond the current school population. This links closely with the Council's priority to provide high quality care and learning for children and young people - wherever possible in their own communities.

In accordance with the duties outlined in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000), The City of Edinburgh Council presumes that, unless exceptional circumstances exist, children and young people will be educated within mainstream schools and to provide school education which is directed to the development of their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. It is recognised that where children and young people require a higher level of support than can be

provided within mainstream schools, a specialist provision may be necessary. It is expected that this will be the case for a small number of children with enduring, complex and profound needs.

The City of Edinburgh Council has a range of specialist provision for children and young people with enduring, complex or profound needs. We have ten stand-alone specialist schools that support a range of learners from early years to secondary. In addition, we have an Enhanced Support Base located within six of our mainstream primary schools. The Enhanced Support Base (ESB) model encourages all learners to be part of the wider school community. This provision promotes opportunities, encourages close links and shared experiences with mainstream peers, appropriate to their needs. In a number of our Enhanced Support Provisions individualised, targeted support enables learners to successfully access and participate in their mainstream class for part of the time. In others, because of the significance of their needs and disabilities, children and young people are educated in small groups within adapted environments where a bespoke curriculum can be delivered. Access and inclusion to whole school and community experiences are encouraged as appropriate.

Admission to Specialist Educational Provision for The City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Young People will be decided by the Education Resource Group (ERG). Before making its decision in relation to educational provision which is appropriate for the child or young person, the ERG will take account of the specific educational requirements and any support needs of the child or young person; the presumption that children and young people will be placed within a mainstream school wherever possible; and the views of the child, young person, parent or carer. Support and planning will be delivered in the context of The City of Edinburgh Council Council's Child Planning Framework.

Specialist Provisions

The City of Edinburgh Council has ten stand-alone special schools. The number of places in our special schools varies, ranging from 48 to 128.

The City of Edinburgh Council has 6 Enhanced Support Bases situated within primary mainstream schools. The number of places in our Enhanced Support Bases varies, ranging from 16 to 24.

All children and young people who attend our specialist provisions have enduring, complex or profound needs that require a level and pace of learning significantly below that of their peers.

The curriculum delivered within the provisions varies widely, as the programmes of study offered are tailored to reflect the needs of the cohort of children and young people placed there at any given time. The children and young people are taught through a combination of individual, paired and small group experiences. Transferrable life skills, developing personal independence and enjoyment form the core of the curriculum.

In specialist provisions there is often more flexibility across the stages, meaning pupils may be placed according to their level of functioning and needs, rather than age. For example, children and

young people with enduring, complex or profound needs, who require intensive sensory stimulation are likely to be grouped separately from pupils who often need a low sensory environment. Regardless of groupings, all children will have their learning planned to meet their needs.

Specialist Provision Profile

Although specialist provisions cater for varying needs, which can change over time, all learners have enduring, complex or profound needs as follows:

Children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities have more than one disability, the most significant of which is a profound learning disability. All people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities will have great difficulty communicating. Many people will have additional sensory or physical disabilities, complex health needs or mental health difficulties. The combination of these needs and/or the lack of the right support may also affect behaviour. Some other people, such as those with autism and Down's syndrome may also have profound and multiple learning disabilities. All children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities will need high levels of support with most aspects of daily life.

The City of Edinburgh Council adopt the MENCAP definition. MENCAP define learners with profound learning needs as having some or all of the following:

- more than one disability;
- a profound learning disability;
- great difficulty communicating;
- needs high levels of support;
- may have additional sensory or physical disabilities, complex health needs or mental health difficulties;
- may have challenging behaviours.

Provision Profile

- Enduring, complex or profound needs typically associated with physical and/or medical health care needs, learning and cognitive needs, language and communication needs, sensory processing needs, and social and emotional needs.
- Requires a level and pace of learning significantly below that of their same aged peers across all areas of the curriculum.
- Requires a highly individualised and highly adapted approach to learning and teaching and access to specialist resources and facilities.
- Requires a highly individualised and adapted augmentative communication approach to learning and teaching across the curriculum.

- Requires highly individualised assessment and planning approach by a multi-agency team.

Specialist Provision Classroom Size

Mainstream school classrooms sizes are based on 1.75 m² per pupil and on average, the standard classroom size is 60 m².

Specialist provision classrooms require more area per pupil to take into account the high staff to pupil ratios, where a number of support staff are often required to work alongside the teacher to support pupils.

Specialist provisions also need space to:

- Support pupils who use wheelchairs and/or other mobility aids to move around effectively, independently or with assistance. This equipment can increase in size and complexity as the pupils grow and develop in physical size.
- Deliver transferable life skills as an integral part of the curriculum e.g. a sink/kitchen area.
- Store equipment when not in use. It is important to note that some pupils may use multiple pieces of different mobility equipment throughout the school day.
- Accommodate specialist interventions from visiting professionals which require a range of small spaces, storage, soft play and sensory rooms.
- Provide pupils with appropriate and intensive personal care which required specialist changing places facilities, often including a shower room.

Class Sizes

Class sizes in our specialist provisions take into account the following:

- individual needs of children and young people;
- the age and stage of children and young people;
- peer group;
- the size of the space available;
- the specialist facilities required;
- health and safety duties;
- SNCT guidance (see Appendix 1).

Class Composition

Ways of grouping children and young people within our specialist provisions vary according to a range of factors, but most importantly the individual needs of the children and young people who are placed there.





It is recognised that children in specialist provision require continuity of support and limited transitions and therefore children should spend most of their time with one class and their class teacher.





Class compositions may change from year to year to best meet the needs of all learners.

It should also be noted that secondary settings must take into account the needs of the Senior Phase and respect this period in a young person's education as a key factor in progressing to a positive destination post-school.

Specialist Provisions

Specialist Provision	Head Teacher	Sector	Overall Capacity/Class size	Provision Profile

<p>Braidburn School 107 Oxfords Road North, Edinburgh, EH14 1ED</p>		<p>Nursery Primary and Secondary</p>	<p>128 pupils across 16 classes + 1 class in Nursery</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see Website: Braidburn School – Working together to support our children and young people to feel safe, happy and ready to learn.</p>
<p>Oaklands School 750 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, EH4 4PQ</p>		<p>Nursery Primary and Secondary</p>	<p>65 pupils across 8 classes + 9 in nursery</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class (9 in the nursery)</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see website Oaklands School Special School, City of Edinburgh Council.</p>
<p>St Crispin's School 1 Burdiehouse Crescent, Edinburgh, EH17 8ES</p>		<p>Primary and Secondary</p>	<p>80 pupils across 13 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 6 pupils per class</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 in deer class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see website: St. Crispin's School</p>
<p>Rowanfield School 67c Groathill Road, Edinburgh, EH4 2SA</p>		<p>Primary</p>	<p>60 pupils across 9 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 6 pupils per class in Willow and Hawthorn</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class in Sycamore</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs in Willow and Hawthorn and profound needs in Sycamore – see Website: Rowanfield School</p>

<p>Redhall School 3C Redhall Grove, Edinburgh, EH14 2SA</p>		<p>Primary</p>	<p>72 pupils across 9 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs - Redhall School – Providing a caring, inclusive and welcoming learning environment for primary age pupils with additional support needs</p>
<p>Prospect Bank School 81 Restalrig Road, Edinburgh, EH6 8BQ</p> <p>Website: Information & News about Prospect Bank School in Edinburgh</p>		<p>Primary</p>	<p>48 pupils across 6 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see website Information & News about Prospect Bank School in Edinburgh</p>
<p>Broughton Enhanced Support Base 132 Broughton Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4LD</p>		<p>Primary</p>	<p>16 pupils across 2 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website ESB 1 – Broughton Primary</p>
<p>Brunstane Enhanced Support Base 106 Magdalene Drive, Edinburgh, EH15 3BE</p>		<p>Primary</p>	<p>24 pupils across 3 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website www.brunstaneps.com</p>

<p>Clovenstone Enhanced Support Base 54 Clovenstone Park, Edinburgh, EH14 3EY</p> <p>██████████</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Primary</p>	<p>24 pupils across 3 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website</p>
<p>Craigtinny Enhanced Support Base 4 Loganlea Drive, Edinburgh, EH7 6LR</p> <p>██████████</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Primary</p>	<p>24 pupils across 3 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website</p>
<p>Murrayburn Enhanced Support Base 1 Sighthill Loan, Edinburgh, EH11 4NP</p> <p>██████████</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Primary</p>	<p>24 pupils across 3 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website</p>
<p>Stenhouse Enhanced Support Base 4 Saughton Mains Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3HH</p> <p>██████████</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Primary</p>	<p>16 pupils across 2 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs – see website</p>
<p>Pilrig Park School 12 Balfour Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5DW</p> <p>██████████</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Secondary</p>	<p>68 pupils across 9 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see website</p> <p>Pilrig Park School Pilrig Park School</p>

<p>Woodlands School 36 Dolphin Avenue, Edinburgh, EH14 5RD</p>		Secondary	<p>88 pupils across 11 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and profound needs – see website Woodlands School</p>
<p>Westfield Secondary School 97 Gorgie Park Road, Edinburgh, EH11 2QL</p>		Secondary	<p>64 pupils across 8 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 8 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring and complex needs</p> <p>Needs website (Under reconstruction will be completed by end of May)</p>
<p>Kaimes School 140 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh, EH16 6RT</p>		Secondary	<p>96 pupils across 16 classes</p> <p>Maximum capacity of 6 pupils per class</p>	<p>Enduring, complex or profound needs</p> <p>Kaimes School</p>

Appendix 1: Placing Requests for Special Schools

Where a child or young person has additional support needs, section 22 and Schedule 2 of the 2004 Act impose a statutory duty upon The City of Edinburgh Council to grant a placing request for specialist provision, unless one or more of the grounds of refusal within the 2004 Act to refuse the placing request applies.

The legal grounds of refusal within the 2004 Act include grounds relating to the individual needs of the child, including whether the child's needs can be met in a mainstream setting or if the school's resources, curriculum or teaching methods are not suited to the child's age, ability or specific additional support needs, to those relating to capacity of the school itself, focusing upon the effect on management of the school. Even if one of the statutory grounds of refusal exists, The City of Edinburgh Council can still exercise its discretion to grant the placing request.

Each specialist school profile is different and will be highly relevant to considering capacity. Timetabling, the manner in which school space is used, practical effect of overcrowding, future organisation of classes are relevant considerations in considering capacity grounds. Capacity grounds include:

- Additional teacher Schedule 2 para 3(1)(a)(i) 2004 Act. There are no limits prescribed in legislation as to how many children with ASN can be placed within a classroom, unlike legislation relating to primary school classes. However, relevant considerations are the class composition and space(s) available; teaching staff/pupil ratios, as per the SNCT Guidance, reflecting contractual conditions for teachers; whether that cap on ratios within the SNCT Guidance would be breached by granting the placing request; and whether there are available resources for redeploying a teacher from elsewhere, even out with the school to which the placing request relates.
- Significant expenditure on accommodation or facilities Schedule 2 para 3(1)(a)(ii) 2004 Act. To establish this ground, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the child or young person cannot be accommodated within a teaching area, without significant cost being incurred. Of relevance are the overall physical space, number of classrooms and their sizes, class composition, areas which are “general purpose areas” and not to be included as areas for teaching, for example, staff areas, health and safety legislative requirements. Also of relevance is the use of the word “significant”, indicating that the costs to be incurred are more than trivial, but are of consequence in terms of overall budgets and allocation of financial resources.
- Capacity of the school would be exceeded, even although not necessary to employ an additional teacher or incur significant expenditure on altering accommodation or facilities Schedule 2 para 3(1)(d). Determination of capacity of a school is a policy decision of the Education Authority. There is a distinction between planned capacity and working capacity of a school and in determining whether the capacity of the school has been exceeded, the working capacity and how it is formulated are relevant considerations. Also relevant is whether the separate ground of refusal that granting the placing request would be seriously detrimental to the educational well-being of other pupils attending the school applies Schedule 2 para 3(1)(a)(v). This separate ground focuses upon the detriment to the educational wellbeing of other pupils, rather than the characteristics of the individual child to whom the placing request relates. If the child being placed in a school where capacity will be exceeded also has the practical effect of overcrowding or altering of timetables for existing pupils, this separate ground may apply.

Appendix 2: SNCT Class Sizes for Special Schools and Units

Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) is a tripartite body comprising members from teaching organisations, Local Authorities, and the Scottish Government. They have agreed class sizes in specialist provision to be as follows:

Additional Support Needs	Number of pupils
Moderate learning difficulties	10
Profound learning difficulties	10 **
Severe physical impairment	8
Severe learning difficulties	8
Significant hearing impairment	6
Significant visual impairment	6
Language and communication difficulties	6
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties	6

Note: ** This figure applies where teachers are complemented by support staff and councils are recommended to apply an adult/pupil ratio of 1:2.5.